

Typescript of Mary Tappan Wright's (wife of Professor John Henry Wright) story of Swamiji's visit to Annisquam in August, 1893.
(Corrections in ink are hers)

Original given to us by her son, John K. Wright. 10, 1942 (VSNC
ARCHIVES Reference #2 of 2)

[The words of the text enclosed by square brackets below all belong to Mrs. Wright's draft and are best ignored to get a meaningful text.]

~~SWAMI~~
VIVEKANANDA

[It was an unfashionable place at the seashore, as unfashionable that its frequenters seldom mentioned it lest someone also should find it out and invade that little community, artistic and literary, with carriages and out riders, fashionable bonnets and fatiguing changes of toilet. They lived as they pleased and they pleased often to be very picturesque and charming. But it was done inexpensively and spontaneously, hence their dread of discovery. But one day (they were) it was destined to receive a sensation which, might, after all, be called the sensation of (their lives) its life. For among the quietest and simplest people who came to this place was a professor and his wife, who seldom added anything but a sort of imperturbable good nature to the interest and excitement of the summer.] On (this) a day, at an unfashionable place by the sea the professor (might be) was seen crossing the lawn between the boarding house and his cottage accompanied by a (remarkable being) man in a long red coat. The coat, which had something of a priestly cut, (and) descended far below the man's knees, and was girded around his waist with a thick cord of the same reddish orange tint. He walked with a strange, shambling gait, and yet there was a (tremendous) commanding dignity and impressiveness in his carriage of his neck and bare head that caused everyone in sight to stop and look at him; he moved slowly, with the (gait) swinging tread of one who had never hastened, and in his great dark eyes was the beauty of (another) an alien civilization which might---should time and circumstance turn it into opposition---become intolerably repulsive. He was dark, about the colour of a light quadroon, and his full lips, (that) which in a man of (lighter skin) (another) Caucasian race would have been brilliant scarlet, had a tint of bluish purple. His teeth were regular, white, and sometimes cruel; but his beautiful expressive eyes and the proud wonderful carriage of his head, the swing and grace of the heavy crimson tassels that hung from the end of his (silken) sash, made one forget that he was too heavy for so young a man (he was unpleasantly heavy), and that long sitting on the floor had visited him with the fate of the tailor.

(The place was buzzing with interest,) Was he a negro? Was he an Indian?---the people were buzzing with interest. (And) Finally (it settled

upon the fact) they decided that he was a Brahmin, (which, however,) but the theory was rudely shattered when that night, at supper, they saw him partake, wonderingly, but evidently with relish, of hash.

(That night they called upon the professor and his wife in their cottage, which had once been a woodshed, and seated in their midst this strange new being discoursed to them out of the past centuries.)

It was something that needed explanation and that night they unanimously repaired to the cottage after supper, to hear this strange new being discourse.

He seemed very young, even younger than his twenty-eight ears, and as he seated himself, he covered his legs carefully with his flowing robe, like a woman or a priest; but the hoary ancient turn of his thought belied his (childishness) child-like manner.

'It was the other day,' he would say, in his (strange rolling) musical voice, 'only just the other day---not more than four hundred years ago.' And then would follow (strange) tales of cruelty and oppression, of a patient race and a suffering people, and of a judgment to come! 'Ah, the English, the English,' he would say, 'only just a little while ago they were savages, hor-r-rible creatures, the vermin crawled on the ladies' bodices, oh hor-r-rible, hor-r-rible, and they scented themselves to disguise the abominable odour of their disgusting persons. Hor-r-rible, hor-r-rible, most hor-r-rible! (and that was only a little while ago,) they are barely emerging (now) from barbarism.

'Nonsense,' said one of his scandalized hearers, 'that was at least five hundred years ago.'

'And did I not say "a little while ago"? What are a few hundred years when you look at the antiquity of the human soul?' Then with a turn of tone, quite reasonable and gentle, 'They are savages,' he would say, 'quite savages; the frightful cold, the want and privation of their northern climate,' going on more quickly and warmly, 'has made them *wild*. They only think to kill, they are assassins, murderers! Where is their religion? They take the name of that Holy One, they claim to love their fellow men; they civilize---by Christianity! ---No! It is their hunger that has civilized them, not their God. The love of man is on their lips, in their hearts there is nothing but evil and every violence. "I love you my brothers, I love you," clinching an imaginary Hindoo in one hand and slowly sawing an imaginary throat with the index finger of (another) the other, and speaking in high wheedling tones with flashing eyes and sneering lips, ---"I love you, my brother, ---*and all the while they cut his throat!*" Their hands are *red* with blood, devils, murderers, and assassins!' Then, going on more slowly, his beautiful voice deepening till it sounded like a bell, 'But the judgment of God will fall upon them, "I am the god of vengeance," said the Lord, "I will destroy" and destruction is coming. What are your Christians? Not one third of the world. Look at those Chinese, millions of them. They are the vengeance of God that will light upon you. There will be another invasion of the Huns," adding, with a little chuckle, 'there will be another Attila. They will sweep over Europe; they will not leave one stone standing upon another. Men, women, children, all will go and the dark ages will come again.' His voice

was indescribably sad and pitiful; then suddenly and flippantly, dropping the seer, 'Me, ---I don't care.' The world will rise up better from it, but it is coming. The vengeance of God, it is coming soon.'

'Soon?' they all asked.

'It will not be a thousand years until it is done.'

They drew a breath of relief. It did not seem imminent.

'And God will have vengeance,' he went on, 'You may not see it in religion, you may not see it in politics, but you must see it in history; and as it has been, it will come to pass. If you grind down the people, you will suffer. We in India are suffering the vengeance of God. Look upon these things. They ground down those poor people for their own wealth, they heard not the voice of distress, they ate from gold and silver when people cried for bread, and the Mohammedans came upon them slaughtering and killing (them): Slaughtering and killing they overran them. India has been conquered again and again for years, and last and worst of all came the Englishman. ---You look about India, what has the Hindoo left? Wonderful temples, everywhere. What has the Mohammedan left? Beautiful palaces. What has the Englishman left? Nothing but mounds of broken brandy bottles! ---And God has no mercy upon my people because they had no mercy. By their cruelty they degraded the populace, and when they needed them the common people (the people) had no strength to give for their aid. If man cannot believe in the Vengeance of God, he certainly cannot deny the Vengeance of History. And it will come upon the English; they have their heels on our necks, they have sucked the last drop of our blood for their own pleasures, they have carried away with them millions of our money, while our people have starved by (whole) villages and provinces. And now the Chinaman is the vengeance that will fall upon them; If the Chinese rose today and swept the English into the sea, *as they well deserve*, it would be no more than justice.'

And then, having said his say, the Swami was silent. A babel of thin-voiced chatter rose about him, to which he listened, apparently unheeding. Occasionally he cast his eye up to the roof and repeated softly 'Shiva, Shiva, Shiva,' and the little (community) company, shaken and disturbed by the current of powerful feeling and vindictive passion which seemed to be flowing like molten lava beneath the silent surface of this strange being, (went away, checked and) broke up---perturbed.

He stayed days among them, keenly interested in all practical things; his efforts to eat strange food were heroic and sometimes disastrous to himself, and he was constantly looking about for something which would widen the possibilities of feeding his people in times of famine. Our ways seemed to inspire him with a sort of horror, meat-eating cannibals that we seemed to be! (to him.) But he concealed it, either with absolute dumbness or by a courteous flow of language which effectually hid his thought.

He had been brought up amidst polemics and his habit of argument (seemed) was mainly Socratic, beginning insidiously and simply by a story, or (a) clear statement of some incontestable fact, and then from that deriving strange and unanswerable things (were derived). (And) All

through, his discourse abounded in picturesque illustration and beautiful legend(s). To work, to get on in the world, in fact any measure of temporal success (in the present life) seemed, to him, (to be) entirely beside the subject. He had been trained to regard (the real things of this earth as the spiritual life,) the spiritual life as the real thing of this world, Love of God, and love of man. One beautiful story he told of a man whose wife reproached him with his troubles, reviled him because of the success of others, and recounted to him all his failures. "Is this what your God has done for you?" she said to him, 'after you have served him so many years?' Then the man answered, 'Am I a trader in religion? Look at that mountain. What does it do for me or what have I done for it? And yet I love it because I am so made that I love the beautiful. Thus I love God.'" And the love of the Hindoo,' he told us, 'goes further than the love of the Christian, for that stops at man; but the religion of Buddha goes on towards the beasts of the field and every creeping thing that has life.'

At sixteen he had renounced the world and spent his time among men who rejoiced in these things and looked forward to spending day after day on the banks of the Ganges talking of the higher (things) life. There was one story he told of a king who offered a gift to a Rishi. The Rishi refused but the king insisted and begged that he should come with him. When they (got) came to the palace he heard the king praying, and the king begged for wealth, for power, for length of days from the God; (and) the Rishi listened, wondering, until at last he picked up his mat and started away. Then the king opened his eyes from his prayers and saw him. 'Why are you going?' he said. 'You have not asked for your gift.' 'I,' said the Rishi, 'ask from a beggar?'

(And) When someone suggested to him that Christianity (is) was a saving power, he opened his great dark eyes upon him and said, 'If Christianity is a saving power in itself, why has it not saved the Ethiopians, the Abyssinians?' He also arraigned our own crimes, the horror of women on the stage, the frightful immorality in our streets, our drunkenness, our thieving, our political degeneracy, the murdering in our West, the lynching in our South, and we, remembering his own Thugs, were still too delicate to mention them.

'But the English,'---he makes a little sputtering spit (p-p-p-p) and finding them too much for him he puts on his hat and marches out of the room with his back to you. 'Still they have matters better arranged in India than we have here; there are tribes of recognized professional thieves and of these, he told us, they made watchmen.'

He cared more for Thomas à Kempis than for most any other writer, and he translated (him) the Imitation [of Christ] into Sanskrit; [Bengali, *Publisher*] (and) as for receiving the Stigmata he spoke of it as the natural result of an agonizing love of God. The teaching of the Vedas, constant and beautiful, he applied to every event in life, quoting a few rhymes and then translating and with the translation of the story giving the meaning. His mouth, also, was full of wonderful proverbs. 'Of what use is the knowledge that is locked away in books,' he said, in speaking of the (wonderful) memories of Hindoo boys.

Himself a Hindoo monk, he told, once, of a time when he turned into a forest, a trackless forest because he felt that God (lead) was leading him, of how he went on for three days, starving, and how he was more perfectly happy than he had ever been before because he felt that he was entirely in the hands of God. 'When my time comes.' He said, 'I shall go up to the mountain and there, by the Ganges, I shall lay myself down, and with the water singing over me I shall go to sleep, and above me will tower the Himalayas---Men have gone mad for those mountains!'

There was once a monk, he told us, who went far up into the mountains and saw them everywhere about him and above his head towered their great white crests. Far below, thousands of feet, was the Ganges, a narrow stream at the foot of a precipice. 'Shall I then like a log die in my bed when all this beauty is around me?' and he plunged into the chasm.

The Hindoo monks have no monasteries, no property. Often on Swami's lips was the phrase, 'They would not dare to do this to a monk.'

According to him the monks were not allowed to do penance, not allowed to worship, and were, in short, minor deities to the Hindoo people, but yet he was wonderfully unspoiled and simple, claiming nothing for himself, playing with the children, twirling a stick between his fingers with laughing skill and glee at their inability to equal him.

All the people of that little place were moved and excited by this young man, in a manner beyond what might be accounted for (by) his coming from a strange country and a different people. He had another power, an unusual ability to bring his hearers into vivid sympathy with his own point of view. It repelled, in some cases, however, as strongly as it attracted, but whether in support or opposition, it was difficult to keep a cool head or a level judgment when confronted with him.

All the people (in the cottages and the boarding houses) of all degrees were interested; (Little Mrs. Morrill's) women's eyes blazed and (her) their cheeks were red with excitement; (and) even the children of the village talked of what he had said to them (on Sunday evening); all the idle summer boarders trooped to hear him, and all the artists longingly observed him and (thought he would be so magnificent) wanted to paint him.

He told strange stories as ordinary people would mention the wonders of electricity, curious feats of legerdemain and (strange) tales of monks who had lived one hundred or one hundred and thirty years; but theosophy, ordinarily so-called, drew down his most magnificent contempt, while magnetism and hypnotism seemed to be everyday occurrences. His holy men at a single glance converted hardened sinners, detected men's most inmost thoughts, and died and came to life again as if they had the nine lives of a cat; but these things were trifles, his thoughts (seemed to turn) turned back to his people. He lived to raise them up and make them better and had come this long way in the hope of gaining help to teach them, to be practically more efficient. He hardly knew what he needed: money, if money would do it; tools, advice, new ideas. And for this he was willing to die tomorrow. (And in fact) At times he even expressed a great longing that the English government would

take him and shoot him. 'It would be the first nail in their coffins,' he would say, with a little gleam of his fierce white teeth, 'and my death would run through the land like wild fire.'

His great heroine was the dreadful Rhanee of the Indian mutiny, who lead [led] her troops in person. Most of the old mutineers he said had become monks in order to hide themselves, and it accounted very well for the dangerous quality of the monks' opinions. There was one man of them who had lost four sons and could speak of them with composure, but whenever he mentioned the Rhanee he would weep, with tears streaming down his face. 'That woman was a goddess,' he said, 'a *devi*. When overcome, she fell on her sword and died like a man.'

It was strange to hear the other side of the Indian mutiny, when you could never believe that there was another side to it, and to be assured that a Hindoo could not possibly kill a woman. It was probably the Mohammedans that killed the women at Delhi and at Cawnpore. These old mutineers would say to him, 'Kill a woman! You know we could not do that' and so the Mohammedan was made responsible.

In quoting from the Upanishads his voice was most musical. He would quote a verse in Sanskrit with intonations and then translate it into beautiful English, of which he had a wonderful command. And in his mystical religion he seemed perfectly and unquestioningly happy. But, curiously enough, with the princely pride of his carriage there was mingled that strange 'respect of persons' which we so often see in the best class of educated negro, the sorrowful, tragic, ineffaceable mark of a down-trodden race; and, at times, this inspired a distrust which in some cases amounted to aversion. [His family was descended from Visvamitra, happy in his mystical religion, but curiously enough, with the princely pride of his carriage, there was mingled at the same time a strange commonness and servility, the natural outcome of belonging to a down-trodden race; and at times he inspired a distrust that amounted almost to aversion.]

And yet, when they gave him money, it seemed [almost] as if some injury had been done him and some disgrace put upon him. 'Of all the worries I have ever had,' he said, as he left us, 'the greatest has been the care of the money!' His horrified reluctance to take it haunted us. [He could not endure to take it, and could not see why he might not] He could not be made to see why he might not wander on in this country, as in his own, without touching [that] a medium of exchange, which he considered disgraceful, and the pain [that] he showed when it was made clear to him that without money he could not even move [in this country], hung round us for days after he left as if we had [given a hurt to some]hurt some innocent thing, or had wounded a soul.

In doing violence to all his ancient prejudices, also, it seemed as if, young as he was, he was playing with fire, and that such playing could not but injure his moral fibre; and we saw him leave us, after that one little week of knowing him, with the fear that clutches the heart [on trusting] when a beloved, gifted, passionate child [to the] [among the perils] fares forth unconscious in an untried world. [We saw him leave us

with the fear one feels at trusting one's beloved child among the perils of a way of which he is not conscious, an untried world.]
